

Diversity in the regulated IP Legal Sector

Introduction

One of the regulatory objectives in the Legal Services Act 2007 is “encouraging an independent, strong, diverse and effective legal profession”. As the regulator for IP legal services, IPReg has recently conducted a survey to identify the diversity profile of our regulated profession. We want to identify how diversity changes over time as well as where greater diversity in the workforce needs to be encouraged.

The data, evidence and intelligence about the diversity of the workforce also informs the development of, and the effectiveness of, our regulatory arrangements, operational processes and other activities.

In Q4 2020, 1180 registrants (approximately 37% of our total registered attorneys) responded to our latest survey and we published the data on our [website](#) in March 2021. Since that time, IPReg has been conducting a series of internal workshops to analyse the results, benchmark them against the UK workforce as a whole and, together with other relevant information, determine our next actions.

We have received a number of requests to analyse the survey data in more detail, to identify where the profession does well, or needs to do better, and to help you benchmark where you and/or your company stands.

In addition to the moral justifications for the elimination of prejudice, (conscious or unconscious), there are sound business reasons for embracing equality, diversity and inclusivity (EDI) practices. Several businesses report an increasing requirement for their suppliers to demonstrate EDI compliance as a condition of business. The emergence of highly pro-active interest groups has significantly raised the profile of poor behaviour, with the resulting reputational risk to businesses and individuals.

A positive approach to EDI and a more diverse workforce can also aid recruitment and make companies more attractive to a wider range of potential employees.

Survey Analysis

In addition to the information we have already published, we have set out in this document some additional analysis including comparisons of the data between firms of different sizes. IPReg is unique among the legal service regulators, in having its regulatory powers delegated from two Approved Regulators (CIPA and CITMA).

Where available we have also referenced against current LSB benchmarks (as published in their Dashboard – May 2021) and the results of our previous survey in 2017.

We believe the data is broadly representative of the profile of all our registrants, although there is a slight over-representation of patent attorneys compared to trade mark attorneys. Statistically our survey has an overall confidence interval of +/- 2.26 at a 95% confidence level. However, we would encourage greater participation in future surveys, in order to maximise the accuracy and benefit of our conclusions.

[IPReg action plan](#)

Following consideration of these results by the IPReg Board, IPReg will:

- Appoint a Board member as its EDIB (equality, diversity, inclusion and belonging) ambassador once its newly recruited Board members have been announced (June 2021);
- Continue to work closely with IP Inclusive and other stakeholders to improve the diversity of the profession. IP Inclusive publishes a significant amount of [resources](#) to help promote EDI in the workplace and the profession; IPReg's work with IP Inclusive includes:
 - Funding IP Inclusive's annual operating costs;
 - Recognising IP Inclusive training courses for the purposes of CPD;
- Continue to encourage applications from organisations who are actively working with under-represented groups to increase diversity in those students studying STEM subjects;
- Explore with senior managers and recruiters in our larger regulated firms whether there is an opportunity for money that they pay in the apprenticeship levy to be used in a more targeted way;
- Ensure that consideration of EDI matters are integrated into its review of regulatory arrangements to ensure that they do not present unnecessary barriers to increasing diversity. This will include working with an external expert on diversity issues;
- Encourage firms to consider all the data we have published and how it may help increase diversity in their workforce.